

Making Much of the Covenant-Making God

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[0:00] So, I'm going to do something a little different with the message this morning. Let's see, is that... Aha. Okay.

Normally, when I start a message, I will give what preachers call a proposition. It's the sentence in a sermon. Like, here is everything I'm going to say is going to flow out of that.

I'm going to give that to you at the end today. I'm going to start by giving you the theme of this psalm and what it was about for the ancient Israelites.

The psalmist prays that Yahweh, who now sits enthroned in Zion, would preserve David's house and the holy city in accord with his promises in the Davidic covenant.

None of you said amen. Well, and that's okay, because this is a little foreign to us. The concerns and the issues here don't strike out to us as, this is something I've been dying all day to know.

[0:58] How did this come about when they came to Jerusalem? I'm going to spend quite a bit of time explaining this psalm to us, what it meant for the original audience. I'll say some things along the way about how we can find parallels to ourselves, but when we come to the end of the message, I'm going to give some more pointed applications to demonstrate the relevance of this 3,000-year-old psalm.

So let me say some things about this psalm before we get into it verse by verse. And I've put a few of those things in your handout about the background, but give me just a moment.

Let's see. Now that. No, back. Let me say some things about the background of it.

Your handout says that this is talking about David's installation of the Ark in Zion and Yahweh's revelation of the Davidic covenant. This is an unusual psalm in that it seems to be almost like two poems that have been put together.

On one hand, it's what scholars would call a song of Zion. The first 10 verses are celebrating the fact that the Lord's presence is to be found in Zion and God's people go there and rejoice.

[2:18] But then the end of the psalm, verses 11 to 18, is more like a royal psalm. It's where the people are praying for God to be gracious to their king and God promising that, in fact, he is going to preserve their king.

These two things are woven together in these two movements of the psalm. Did you notice as we read it that there are two oaths that are made? That David made an oath that he was going to do all he could to get to the Ark where it ought to be, and Yahweh made an oath that he was going to preserve David and his house.

These two oaths center the two parts of the psalm. The psalm is not by David himself. You know, if you look, for instance, at Psalm 131, look at verse 0 of Psalm 131.

It says, a song of a sense of David. And if you look at, let's say, Psalm 133, verse 0, you see the same thing, a song of a sense of David. But this one, 132, is not by David.

It's largely about David. Perhaps written while he was still alive, or perhaps written shortly thereafter in the days of Solomon.

[3:28] Sometime after, here's a key date. This is one of these anchor dates that you can put in your mind. A lot of things center around this date, 1003 B.C.

1003. That is the year, we estimate, that David conquered Jerusalem and moved the Ark into Zion and made it the religious and political capital of the nation.

This is a song of a sense, we're told, in verse 0, meaning that this is a song that was used when the Israelites would go up to Jerusalem for festivals.

Festivals. Ascending, referring to going up. Jerusalem sat on a hill, so even if you came from the north, by the time you got there, you had to go up. You know, so there are 15 Psalms that have this same heading.

David is the one who started writing them. Because he's the one who sort of brought the Ark out of obscurity and brought it right back into the center of the nation's life. And they began holding festivals, national festivals again, like they'd been commanded to in the law.

[4:29] The law mentioned that there were three festivals each year that every male 20 years and older was required to go to if they were able. And it appears that during the days of Saul, and certainly before that in the days of the judges, that these things were poorly kept, poorly observed.

David is a reformer. He's bringing the nation back into line with the law of God. And he's bringing the Ark into a central position in the nation for this to take place.

There are some of these songs of ascent actually specifically talk about this. Would you flip back a couple pages to Psalm 122? Psalm 122, a song of ascent of David, verse 1.

I was glad when they said to me, let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem that is built, a city that is compact together, to which the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord.

An ordinance for Israel to give thanks to the name of the Lord. There it is. This is a song written for these very kind of celebrations. And so Psalm 132 is now part of an explosion of new worship music that's taking place around the year 1000 BC.

[5:43] A pilgrim song it was, looking back to that day when the Ark came into Zion. In fact, earlier today, Mark read to us in the call to worship from Psalm 24, which I have a theory, and I would not die for this theory.

If someone said, we will martyr you if you do not renounce this, okay, I'm not so sure about it. But I think Psalm 24 is written about the day David brought the Ark into Jerusalem.

Lift up your heads, O everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in. This seems to be celebrating the day that the Ark was brought into Jerusalem.

And worshipers are coming together. And who are the kinds of people the Lord wants to come in? Those who have clean hands and upright heart and so forth. There are some unique things about Psalm 132.

Of all those songs of ascent, there's 15 of them. This one is the longest. It's the only one that mentions David by name in the poem. It's the only one that mentions God's anointed.

[6:49] And it asks for God's blessing and presence to be with the King. This Psalm is a major celebration of the Davidic covenant. The covenant that Nathan announced to King David, 2 Samuel chapter 7.

That part of the Old Testament is one of the backbones, vertebrae of Scripture. If you take that covenant promise out of the Bible, a lot of it falls apart.

It is a key portion of Scripture. And this Psalm is restating some of that covenant in poetry. This Psalm is thinking about how God had in fact chosen Jerusalem.

In one sense, it was David's choice to move the capital there. And yet, David is discerning the will of God that this is the place. You see, back in the days of Moses, when they were wandering and the tabernacle was a mobile temple, the Lord told them that when they got into the land and when they came to a place of rest, that he would make known to them the place where his name would dwell. He didn't give them the name of the place. He leaves it open for them to be a receptive and obedient people. And David discerns that this is the place and this is the time for this new center of worship to be realized.

[8:06] So, I've told you already that the Psalm breaks into two halves. The first half of the Psalm is the people's prayer of devotion, for devotion to be honored.

And then the last half is the Lord's promise to keep David's covenant. So, now let's look more closely at verses 1 to 10. This is the people's prayer about David's devotion.

Now, this will sound strange to us. They're not expressing their own devotion at first. They're talking about David's devotion. But it was so monumental. And they aligned with what David had done.

And so, they're asking the Lord to bless this exertion of effort on their part to make this monumental move for God.

So, they speak in verses 1 to 5 about David's resolve to found a holy place. Most of these verses are going to speak about David's determination.

It's in the form of a prayer that's asking for protection. This is not proud bragging. It's really prayerful begging for God to bless all of the effort that has gone forth.

[9:16] So, let's look at verse 1 where there's a remembrance of David's resolve. Verse 1, Remember, O Lord, on David's behalf, all his affliction, the commitment and hard work it took in making Zion the religious capital.

He's asking God to remember the Davidic covenant and the special arrangement with this choice reformer of Israel. David went through affliction, suffering, hardship of different kinds.

You know, now this is self-inflicted affliction. It's something he chose to do. And yet, it was difficult to get the ark, to get the people to move it there.

And you remember the story in 2 Samuel 6. David, while he was good-hearted, was not always observant to the law. And there's a period where they've, you know, they're carrying the ark and it's about to tip over.

And Uzzah puts out his hand to hold the ark. And Uzzah is struck dead. And everything stops. And they put the ark to the side. And they're like, maybe, did we not understand?

[10:21] Well, yes, there were some things you didn't understand. So, but David is still committed. And over a passage of time, they bring the ark back. And in addition to his resolve in bringing the ark then, there would be years later, he starts planning for the temple.

He's not allowed to build a temple, but he prepares for it. He starts buying the things and stockpiling the supplies that Solomon is going to use to build the temple. Listen to 1 Chronicles 22, 14.

Now, behold, with great pains, David says, I have prepared for the house of the Lord 100,000 talents of gold and 1,000,000 talents of silver and bronze and iron beyond weight, for they are in great quantity.

Also, timber and stone I have prepared. David had worked very, very hard. Now, I want to pause here to make a point of connection with us.

Doing a work for God often exacts a toll from us. Now, we would like it if when we serve the Lord that it would always be convenient.

[11:32] And sometimes in church life, we have different levels of service, and we try to make certain things that are readily accessible that people, perhaps those who are new in the Lord, can sort of step into easily.

But if that is the extent of our service to the Lord, we are missing something. Service to our God is sometimes expensive of our time and our energy and our resources.

This is why Paul tells the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 15, 58, Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

And the Lord, see, it's that same principle. The Lord honors the faithful service of his servants.

Sometimes we labor and we work and we work and we wonder, is this working?

Am I accomplishing anything? I have the sense that I'm being faithful, but I don't seem to be that fruitful. So, verses like what Paul said and psalms like the one we're reading remind us that the Lord brings blessing on the faithful, fervent work of his servants.

[12:46] So, verse 1 is a remembrance of David's resolve. Let's look at verses 2 to 5, which is a recitation of David's oath. Now, here we're going to read in poetic form the sort of heart attitude that David had when he was thinking about this.

You're not going to find these words in the book of Samuel or Chronicles. Sometimes the psalms fill in gaps in our understanding of those stories. This is a poetic summary of a vow that David made about making Jerusalem the religious center of the nation.

It begins by talking about his selfless determination. How he, verse 2, how he swore to the Lord and vowed to the mighty one of Jacob.

Now, don't speed over that. Look at the second title for Yahweh that's used. He's the mighty one of Jacob. Mighty one. That first word, mighty one, in the Hebrew text is related for a word for a bull.

You know, a mighty bovine with overpowering strength. Jacob is another name for Israel.

Interestingly, whenever the Old Testament uses Jacob's name to describe the nation of Israel, there's often some focus on the weakness of the nation.

[14:08] Remember Jacob, the one who halted and limped for the rest of his life? A man who found himself finally coming to an end in his own resources and trusting in God. That's the way the nation needed to be.

They have a mighty one at work for them. Now, another reason that the psalm brings this up, you know, the first person in the Bible ever to make a vow to set up an altar was Jacob.

And so here is David now making a vow to bring the ark to Jerusalem. The ark is a kind of a mobile altar. David is following in Jacob's tradition. And by using this language again, David understands that he was involved in a new move of God.

Verse 3 and 4 continues talking about his selfless determination. Surely I will not enter my house nor lie on my bed. I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids.

Now, there are, in those couple of verses, there are three negatives that are very strong. In fact, now the Hebrew text sounds a little more foreign to us. This is what it is in the Hebrew text.

[15 : 18] If I enter my house, if I lie on my bed, if I give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids until I found a place, and then the sentence ends.

There's three ifs. Now, what's unstated, this is a common Hebrew expression for making a vow. The unstated part is, if I don't do this, then may God strike me dead.

Sometimes you actually will see that if, then fully expressed in Old Testament statements. This is the language of a vow, of oath-making. The oath is, in David's part, how tirelessly he's going to work until he's secured the new shrine of Yahweh for the nation.

This is combining, actually, two parts of his determination over a period of years. His determination to bring the ark into Jerusalem and then to set up the ground where the temple itself would be built. He has a desire to do that in 2 Samuel 7. And a big part of this work was determining God's choice, what God's will was. This is a real oath.

[16 : 29] Now, I will say that there's some poetic overstatement in it. Remember, we're in a poetic text. Poetry tends to use grand language. Sometimes the grand language is to be taken very literally.

This is a case where it's not really quite literal. It would have been impossible for David not to sleep before everything was set up at the sanctuary. Do you remember the story back in 2 Samuel 6? They bring the ark halfway. The priest gets killed. The ark goes away and for months, it sits there. So, don't read this to mean David didn't sleep for months. That's not the idea.

There are other Old Testament passages, by the way, that use the same language about not giving rest to my eyes. It refer to determination. An unwillingness to be detoured from a goal that you set before you.

Now, the language here is poetic, but David's commitment is very, very powerful. Daniel Estes, the commentator, says, Realizing that great commitments can be derailed by small compromises, David determined not to allow lesser things to deter him from his intended task.

[17 : 42] That's important. You know, that makes me think of there's a classic hymn. I don't know if you sing it here. Rise up, O church of God. Rise up, O church of God.

Have done with lesser things. Give heart and soul and mind and strength to serve the King of Kings. What a great intention of the heart that is.

The work of ministry, New Covenant church ministry, is an ongoing, endless kind of thing. It is a tiring work. Paul spoke about, when he was in Thessalonica, that he had sometimes sleepless nights where he was laboring, working through how to deal with issues that were popping up in this new church he was discipling.

Also, literally working. We're paying his own way. So he had the combination of his own self-employment, coupled with the ardor and rigor of ministry. Now, Paul was not a guy living on constant burnout.

It's not that. But he was willing to burn on for the Lord, if need be, to exert himself and extend himself. We're not all called to the same level of involvement in ministry.

[18 : 58] There are some who are called to full-time labor, and they completely give themselves over to that. But we all, as believers, are called to engage in God's work and to be fully committed to it, as fully committed as we are able to be.

This is a holy resolve, selfless determination. And David also has, verse 5, speaks about a holy purpose. Here's what he's actually promising now.

He wanted to bring God's worship center to a fitting place.

Do you know how long the Ark of the Covenant had sat in Kiriath Je'arim? And you say, where's that? It's in the backwoods of the hills of Judah.

It's sort of a nothing place. 70 years the Ark had been relegated to the backwoods. Saul trots the Ark out a time or two, but never makes any effort to centralize the nation's worship.

[20:08] David's goal here is to bring the Ark out of obscurity and make it central to the life of the nation. He again mentions the mighty one of Jacob, the same phrase that was used earlier. Because David recognizes that in this period of life, this period of the kingdom's life, that God is on the move again.

His dwelling place is going to become fixed in a prominent center in the nation's life. Now, right away, we need to address some things that are different about us and David and these Old Testament worshipers.

In David's day, there was a place, a literal place, where you could go to get closer to God. God made His presence known within the Ark and there was a sanctum around it and another sanctum around that and various layers of holiness around the Ark of the Covenant.

And that is not true of us anymore. Now, you have a lovely meeting room here, but you don't have to have this in order to meet. Now, I'm not proposing anything at all.

But Christian gathering places are not centered on location. We don't have holy places anymore. The Lord Jesus talked about this with the woman at the well.

[21:28] She was, you know, there was a debate amongst the Samaritans and the Jews as to where the holy mountain was supposed to be. The Samaritans had their own unorthodox view that they had a mountain where the temple was supposed to be.

And the Lord Jesus tells her, look, the time is coming. Well, first He tells her, salvation is of the Jews, meaning you guys are kind of whacked out in your theology. But the time is coming and now is when you'll no longer say, should we go to this mountain or to that mountain?

The Lord is seeking those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. Jesus signifying that there was a change coming in the way that God's people would engage in worship. It's not place-oriented anymore.

It's person-oriented. It's focused upon Christ. It is so important for us, though, if I can make a point of parallel between David's experience on a particular place and our focus on a particular person, it is so important for us that the Lord is in His proper place place in our lives and in our choices and in our families and within our church.

The Lord needs to be where He ought to be, front and center of everything. That ties into the spirit of what David is talking about here in his holy resolve.

[22:56] So these first five verses are about David's resolve to found a holy place for the Lord. Look with me now in verses 6-9, 6-10, as there's Israel's celebration of God's presence.

There are two types of speeches that intertwine here. There's the talk of God's people amongst themselves about how they're excited about what the Lord is doing, and then there's a prayer from the people expressed to God.

Verses 6-9 is that talk amongst themselves. It's the celebration about the ark's restoration. They note how, in verse 6, it has been recovered from obscurity.

So verse 6, now notice the shift to we. Behold, we have heard of it in Ephratah. We found it in the field of Ja'ar.

The we, these are the faithful people who were supporting David in all this work. Ephratah is a place that's not mentioned very often. This is David's home area.

[24:06] It's the region around Bethlehem. It's mentioned in Ruth 4 and Micah 5. It's a word that means fruitful. Bethlehem was an agricultural town too, house of bread.

These are farm towns, farm areas. The people from Bethlehem were among the first people to respond to David's call to go bring up the ark.

So we were in the area of Bethlehem. We were in Ephratah. We heard of it in Ephratah. That's where we were. And we found it, that is the ark, in the field of Ja'ar.

Now, what an interesting thing that is. Now, Ja'ar is the, is one way of saying Ja'arim. Ja'ar is a Hebrew word that means wood.

Ja'arim is woods. Kiriath, Ja'arim, is city of the woods. This is a backwoods area. So they're referring to how, where, that place where the ark had been for 70 years.

[25:06] The time has come to get it out of there and bring it, bring it to Jerusalem, bring it front and center. Aqiriath, Ja'arim, is not a place where people could assemble in mass, to keep festival, to bring sacrifices.

The ark was being maintained, apparently, by a faithful small core of Levites and priests, but things were not running as they ought to be. So, the people here now in verse 7 resolve to worship

properly.

Verse 7, let us go into his dwelling place. Let us worship at his footstool. Maybe this is a song that pilgrims would recite as they made their way to Jerusalem for festivals, to go to that dwelling place. In fact, the ark is here called the footstool. I want you to think about the ark. The ark is a unique piece of furniture. Firstly, the word ark means box.

And it's really a storage box. It's a safety deposit box. And things are safely kept in it. The Ten Commandments and Aaron's rod that budded and a jar of manna.

[26 : 15] These are all key parts of Israel's past. And their covenant relationship. You know, the Ten Commandments is the heart of the covenant made at Mount Sinai. This is the ark which holds the covenant.

And then the top of it is a seat. It's a throne. And it's also an altar. The ark is really many things. It's representative of their unique covenant relationship with the Lord.

And yet, God, when he is present in the ark, is not in a box. They don't have God in a box that they can trot around and control and manipulate.

Sometimes the Lord will speak very directly about the fact that his throne is really in heaven. He does have a throne on earth, but if you're going to compare the two, that one is the throne and this one is the footstool.

That's what they mean in this line in verse 7. And so, they then make some requests for Yahweh's presence in verses 8 and 9.

[27 : 24] Verse 8, Arise, O Lord, to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. They're praying now for God as the ark is moved. This is all recollective.

They're looking back to what's already happened. That the Lord would be pleased to dwell there at this footstool for him to place his feet, as it were, firmly now in Jerusalem.

We read, I think it was, was it with you last week? We read out of Numbers 10, verses 35 to 36.

Then it came about when the ark set out and Moses said, Rise up, O Lord, and let your enemies be scattered.

Let those who hate you flee before you. And when it came to rest, he said, Return, O Lord, to the myriad thousands of Israel. Well, this psalm verse right here is using that language of rise up, O Lord, as the ark has moved to its resting place.

The ark had led the people into Canaan to have conquest and now to have rest. And now it was time for the ark to make one last great move to Zion.

[28 : 28] Zion, you know, is a Canaanite word. It probably means fortress. And the Jebusites had run this city for quite a while while Israel was all around.

Saul didn't do anything about it. Finally, David conquers Jerusalem. And there's a sense in which now this city right in the heart of the country, this is symbolic of the rest that God had promised when they came to the land and followed His will.

Now, don't misunderstand this about God's resting place. It's not like God is worn out. This is not, you know, vacation time for God. The rest is not about His recuperating.

It's about this sense of peace. Now, there was still some more conquering to be done. In fact, this is one of the reasons that David is not allowed to build the temple himself.

It's left for his son, Shlomo, which is related to the word Shalom, the one who has, brings, has a time of peace. This theme of rest is such a beautiful one in the scripture.

[29 : 34] Daniel Estes says, Divine and human kingdom rest in the Garden of Eden was disrupted by human sin, but the prospect of its restoration through revelation was symbolized by His rest in the tabernacle and then in the temple.

When they thought about the rest that God had given them in this land, it was symbolic of the ultimate restoration of that full union between God and man and the plan of redemption that the Lord had begun, which He will complete through His Son, the Lord Jesus.

There's one more part of their prayer in verse 9. Let your priests be clothed with righteousness. Let your godly ones sing for joy. These priests who tended the ark and the tabernacle, you know, before David's day, the priesthood was a mess.

I mean, how does the book of Samuel open? You've got Eli, the high priest, who can't tell when a woman is praying fervently. He thinks she's drunk. And his sons, I mean, he was partly, he was losing his physical eyesight.

He'd really lost his spiritual eyesight. And his two reprobate sons are horrifically abusing the priesthood for their own sexual desires and financial desires. The religious state of the nation is disastrous.

[30 : 58] And finally, this worst point is when they trot the ark of the covenant out into battle and the Philistines steal it. Things look up with Samuel. Things seem to look up with Saul.

But Saul turns out to be a persecutor of the priesthood. Through Doeg, the Edomite, he kills almost all of the high priest's family at the city of Nob. So David's coming to power.

David's coming to Jerusalem and the ark's coming now to Zion is a major period of reformation and revival in the nation's life. And that's why we have the book of Psalms, over half of which are by David.

There's an explosion of new music. You know, one of the things as you look through the Psalms, you'll find about 75 times a Psalm of David. A Psalm of David. You know what you'll never find? You'll never see a Psalm of Saul.

That's not where his heart was. In David's day, there's this desire for the priest to be clothed with righteousness, to be known, not like Eli and Hophni and Phinehas, but be known for their godliness, that their qualification for ministry would not just be who their father was.

[32 : 10] And this would be result in joy for everyone who came to worship Yahweh, the saints among the people. Now, there's one more prayer in intercession for the king, for the anointed king in verse 10.

For the sake of David, your servant, do not turn away the face of your anointed. This is one of the very few times in the Psalms that the word anointed shows up. Mashiah.

In the Greek language, it's Christos. It's mentioned in Psalm 2 and here, Psalm 132. David, of course, was anointed numerous times, three times actually.

Anointed by Samuel, anointed by the tribes of Judah, anointed again by all the tribes when he became king over all of them. This prayer is asking that what happened to Saul who had been an anointed king not happen to David or his descendants.

This is not so much about salvation, not turning away from the face of your anointed. This isn't so much about everlasting salvation as it is the divine enabling for service. This is why David prays in Psalm 51, verse 11, Do not cast me away from your presence.

[33 : 26] Do not take your Holy Spirit from me. This is not about me dying and going to hell. This is about, Lord, I don't want to be like Saul. Your spirit left him.

David had sinned grievously, but he found grace. And so the people here are praying, Do not turn away your face from your anointed one. They make intercession for the king.

Well, let's move on to the second half of the psalm, verses 11 to 18. This is now the Lord's promise to keep David's covenant.

It starts off with the promise to bless David's royal house in verses 11 to 12. Verse 11 says, The Lord has sworn to David a truth from which he will not turn back.

Now, remember this, verse 2 tells us that David had made an oath about the ark. And now, verse 11 tells us that the Lord has made an oath about David. In fact, the language here in verse 11 is more emphatic than the language back earlier.

[34 : 38] An oath is, what's being spoken about here is a promise on steroids. This is a super promise. The Lord has sworn to David he will not go back from it.

How good it is we have a God who makes it crystal clear that he means what he says. Now, in one sense, he doesn't have to do this. I mean, if God says something we ought to just take it for that. But because of the denseness and the dullness of our hearts and because of our own propensity to be unfaithful to things we promise to do, certain major things in Scripture God promises with an oath as if to say, and if I don't do this, may death come upon me.

Look at the second part of verse 11. Here is the promise to bless David's house. Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne. If your sons will keep my covenant and my testimony which I will teach them, their sons also shall sit on your throne forever.

So what you have right here is a poetic version of the Davidic covenant from 2 Samuel chapter 7. This is that oath put to music.

[35 : 58] It is an inspired poem of the prophecy that Nathan gave to David in 2 Samuel 7. Of the fruit of your body this is a reference to his offspring.

The first one who would sit on the throne lawfully would be Solomon. This term fruit, instead of just saying your son, by using this word fruit it's implying prosperity and fruitfulness.

This is like the language of Genesis 1. The very first command that God gives to mankind is be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.

Now look at this. Here's David the king. He is going to be fruitful and his line is going to multiply and he is going to subdue. He's going to reign.

In David's kingship you have a little foreshadowing of the restoration of the plan for mankind that began before the fall. There's a covenant that the Lord makes with him.

[37:02] It is on one hand an unconditional covenant. I am going to do this. I will preserve your line. And yet there's also a conditional side to it.

That if your descendants are to enjoy the blessings of my help they need to follow my word. So there's one aspect of this where the Lord is going to do it.

He will do it unilaterally. There's another side where age by age, period by period, the enjoyment of these promises are going to be conditioned. Kingship can be suspended if David's descendants are unfaithful.

You know, we are in a different covenant relationship with the Lord. We are in some ways blessed by the Davidic covenant. Our Savior is King Jesus. He's the son of David.

But we relate to God more directly through the new covenant. And in the new covenant, which is this promise that the Lord is going to take his people and make them new from the inside out, cause them to know him and love them and bring them into everlasting fullness.

[38:09] That promise, in one sense, is unilateral. God has started it. He's going to see it through to the end and bring it to completion. And yet, there is also a conditional element within it.

If you and I want to know the blessings day by day and moment by moment of God's presence, we need to follow him. If we don't, we receive discipline.

There are some conditions within it. Ultimately, we're secure because of the work that he does. And so also, this promise to David and his line has a mixture of promises that are airtight and universal and also promises that have some conditions built into them.

Look with me in verses 13 to 16, the promise to bless David's holy city. Verse 13 is going to tell us what God did and then the verses after it are going to tell us what he said.

And this is going to closely parallel the prayer requests that the people had made in the first half of the psalm. So we find out in verses 13 and 14 that Zion was God's choice all along.

[39:25] Verse 13, for the Lord has chosen Zion. He has desired it for his dwelling place. Here's the basis for these promises that were made earlier.

These verses are describing God's kingdom as he intended it. His divine presence to be with his human king. In verse 8, Israel had asked God to go to the resting place that had been set up in Zion to finish his move in the settled land.

And here we learn that all of this bringing the ark and all this big parade and procession, all of this was not really just David's idea. God is the one who was on the move.

It was God who had put it in David's heart and those around him. David was trying to discern what was pleasing to the Lord. You know, Johannes Kepler, the great scientist of centuries ago, talked about his work of discovery in the world of creation and he said what he was trying to do was to think God's thoughts after him.

To perceive what it was that God had set in motion. And in a spiritual way, that's what David has done with choosing Jerusalem as the capital. This is not a political maneuver.

[40:44] I'm really a little exercised about this. I read about it in the things I'm dissertating about. There's a lot of people, critical scholars, who think that David is a manipulator. That this was utterly a political move.

You know, you find a city that's in between the north and the south and then you bring the ark, that symbol of God's power, and you say, that's close to me now. That is such a suspicious, unbelieving approach to scripture.

David is not self-seeking. He's not trying to use religion to sure up his reign. He's seeking to do that which pleases God. Listen to Exodus 15.

This is one of these verses that talks about how the Lord would one day reveal to Israel where his sacred place was supposed to be. Exodus 15, verses 17-18, Moses foresaw that 400 years later that place would be revealed.

the Lord says back in our psalm in verse 14, this is the voice of the Lord now. This is my resting place forever. Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.

[42 : 13] I will dwell here, I will sit here, as in sit enthroned here. You know, eventually Solomon would have an enormous palace, and he would build a temple for the Lord.

But the greater king in Jerusalem was always going to be Yahweh. Of course, he wasn't confined to that place, to that box.

He can never be bound by our labors to honor him. So I want us to think about that tension there, something I've mentioned already, that in one sense the Lord's presence was made known in this one place.

This was a place in the earth where you could go and physically get closer to God. And yet, there's another sense which the Old Testament itself says that the Lord is not bound to that place. So there's some profound principles I want us to get from this.

Number one, this is not in your notes, we have a God who may be found. We have a God who may be found, who makes himself known, who chooses to interact with us.

[43 : 23] At the same time, number two, we have a God who cannot be bound, who is beyond our limited understanding, who is greater. And that's something that Solomon, in one of his best days, when they dedicate the temple, they bring the ark into the holy of holies, and the Lord's presence comes and fills the temple.

Solomon prays this lengthy prayer to Yahweh, talking about, you who dwell in heaven, look down here upon us, you're on earth. It's both and. We have a God who can be found, and yet he is a God who is not bound.

Look with me at verses 15 and 16. This is how God's grace was God's plan for his own. The Lord says in verse 15, I will abundantly bless her provision, I will satisfy her needy with bread.

bread. This is more about this rest, kingdom rest that the nation was on the verge of entering into. Now the law had promised that if the people were obedient to the covenant that there would be ultimately no want, no poverty, no famine in their land if they kept covenant.

Of course you know that a large part of the Old Testament is the history of God's people not keeping the covenant. That's not all of it, but that's a big part of the Old Testament.

[44 : 53] They didn't keep the covenant. And so they never fully entered into all the blessings. But here is the Lord saying if my people were called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, I will abundantly bless her provision.

I will satisfy her needy with bread. Verse 16, her priests also I will clothe with salvation and her godly ones will sing aloud for joy.

using very much the same language of verse 9. That God was particularly going to vindicate these priests. You know, the priests had suffered horrifically under Saul.

Many of them decimated. But the Lord was going to raise up faithful ones and already had raised up a new high priest in the days of David named Zadok. And godly laymen, her holy ones, would rejoice to be led by leaders who were truly spiritual.

You know, in the Old Testament, it was possible to have a person who was legitimately a spiritual leader who was unfortunately unspiritual.

[46 : 01] Now I say legitimately, meaning if you were a descendant of Aaron, you were authorized to serve before the altar, to take people's sacrifices and put them up on the altar and go through all the rituals, and yet it was possible for an Old Testament priest to be legitimate in one sense and yet be utterly unregenerate.

Now that's not the way it's supposed to be in the church. There are spiritual qualifications for leadership in the church that have nothing to do with your father or your grandfather was. They are spiritual requirements.

How it is a terrible thing, it is a broken thing when spiritual leaders are unspiritual. But how wonderful it is to have godly leaders who lead people in the joy of the Lord.

And that's what this phrase is delighting in. We come to our last set of verses, verses 17 to 18, the promise to uplift David's eternal heir.

The Lord is still speaking. He says, verse 17, there I will cause the horn of David to spring forth. I prepared a lamp for my anointed. And there's a few things about this.

[47 : 09] Number one, there's the word there, and there is pointing to Jerusalem, Zion, there. And then there's three pictures of the son of David.

I will cause the horn of David to spring forth. Now, right away I want you to know the horn here is not that kind of horn. It's this kind of horn.

This is animal imagery. The king is being likened to a powerful beast. You know, if you've got horns on your head, and I'm not talking about the devil, but if you're a creature with horns on your head, you can move a whole lot of things.

Things get out of your way. And so you'll find in the Psalms references to things like, you who lifts up my horn. In other words, you give me cause to keep my head up high, to be victorious.

I will cause the horn of David to spring forth. This is a phrase, by the way, that's used about our Lord Jesus, the son of David. Luke 1, 68, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and accomplished redemption for his people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.

[48 : 25] So there's that image, a horn. There's another image here, I prepared a lamp for mine anointed. Here's a word picture about God's special guidance and provision of a clear vision.

David himself says in Psalm 18, 28, For you, Lord, light my lamp. The Lord my God illumines my darkness. In one sense, the king himself is a lamp of the Lord, and yet in another sense, he's one who walks with the Lord, and the Lord's light illumines for him the path he ought to go and he ought to take the nation in.

Now the maintainer of this lamp, I have prepared a lamp for mine, is the Lord himself. Now we don't think too much about maintaining lights. You know, when you leave here today, someone's going to flick a switch, I don't know where it is, there's probably a few of them, and all these go out, and you really don't think about it at all.

And then you come back in, oh there they are, and you flip them on, you don't think about it until one of those fluorescent tubes isn't working, and then someone's got to tend to it. Ancient lamps were not that way.

They had to be tended very thoughtfully, very carefully. They're oil lit, they're olive oil, it's a basement with olive oil, it's got a wick sticking out of it. And you've got to trim that wick. If you don't, the lamp, the light goes out.

[49 : 44] So here the image is, the king is like a lamp that the Lord holds, and the Lord is going to maintain him, feed it the fuel it needs, and trim the wick as needed. The Lord's special intendance on David and his line.

Ultimately, this lamp, the one who becomes the brightest lamp of all, the Lord Jesus says of I am the light of the world. He that follows after me shall not walk in darkness.

And so maybe you're seeing now that these promises to David and his line, they have an end point, they have a high point of fulfillment in David's greatest son.

You know, there were times in the Old Testament when it looked like the lamp was gone. The year 586, the Babylonians come to Jerusalem and they destroy it. They destroy the temple, Holy of Holies is gone, ark is never seen again, the kings are gone.

The line is still alive, but they're prisoners. Some of them even blinded, you know, unable to ever lead again. Yet the Lord keeps that line alive.

[50 : 52] Even after they come back and they're in their land again, they don't have a king. It's not until Jesus comes. We sang about it earlier today. come thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free.

The Lord did in fact keep this promise. Jesus is the ultimate light of the world. He is the fulfillment of the undimmed light shining.

Verse 18, the Lord says, His enemies I will clothe with shame, but upon himself his crown shall shine. Literally, his crown will flourish like a sprouting plant.

The same word used to describe Aaron's rod that budded. It's a very unusual word to have a crown sprout. It hints at unique divine activity.

Something very unusual. And this promise of final honor and glory is ultimately fulfilled as we know from the New Testament in David's greatest son.

[52 : 04] Unlike King Saul, who one day his crown, 2 Samuel 1 tells us was found laying in the dirt, Jesus' crown never will be.

Well, we come now to the conclusion and I promise to get a little more practical with you. I've shared with you the theme of this passage that the psalmist is praying that Yahweh, the one who sits enthroned in Zion, that he would preserve David's house and the holy city just like he promised

in the Davidic covenant.

This is a song we've just read and studied, a song about the ark and a rehearsal of God's promises. This is about things that happened 3,000 years ago. We don't have any ceremonies about this in our churches.

There are no traditional Christian holidays for the arrival of the ark. I dare say you have never sung a word about what happened in 1003 B.C.

And that's okay. We don't sing about it. It was a grand event. I mean the psalms talk about it quite a bit. We studied this psalm.

[53:21] We read Psalm 24 and I think there's other psalms that have reference to it as well. But we live on the other side of the arrival of David's greatest son. We sing not about the ark.

We sing about Jesus who is God's personal presence made known to us. We don't sing about the temple of old because we sing of Jesus who is our meeting place with God.

We are thankful for the Davidic covenant and we are blessed and benefit by the Davidic covenant but we relate to God more directly through the new covenant which was been cut through the blood of our Lord Jesus.

We memorialize that great covenant every time we partake of the Lord's Supper. Every time that we take of that bread and take of that drink we remember that there was a price paid that we might have communion with God.

That we might rightly relate to him. and we remind ourselves and reenact in symbolic way the ratification of the new covenant every time we partake of the Lord's table.

[54:27] So there are some things about the celebrations of this psalm that are different from our regular celebrations. But I want to conclude with a couple enduring principles.

One principle and some applications from it that are relevant to us. our covenant keeping God honors those who honor him.

And he is worthy of our utmost labor and love. If I was to come away with a one to do thing, one to learn thing from this psalm, apart from understanding the psalm, one thing for me to implement into my spiritual perspective is this.

Our covenant keeping God honors those who honor him. Remember, O Lord, David and his affliction. The Lord will. And he is worthy of our utmost labor and love.

I'm going to give you a couple lessons on this. I'm going to give you lessons on priorities and a lesson on prayer. The lesson on priorities. David and the people want God to have preeminence.

[55:34] Israel is going through this period around 1,000 of real revival in these glorious days. God was on the move. He was literally on the move in the ark.

He was literally being put in the proper place. It is so important for us as new covenant believers that God is always in first place in our lives.

It's like what Paul says to the Ephesians, especially Ephesians 5, verse 17, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. faith. That is so central to everything.

Or as the Apostle Paul puts it in Colossians, in the parallel passage written around the same time, he says to the Colossians, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Give the message of Christ a rich home within your heart.

Make much of Christ. Let it dominate everything, all your relationships, all your decisions. God is in the midst of his church, his earthly temple during this age of redemption, and we need to make much about how God is on the move.

[56:45] And we need to be on the move for him. These are lessons on priorities. And then think with me about some lessons on prayer.

The prayers that are in this psalm are prayers for God to fulfill his promises. Everything they pray for is already things that God has promised. It is not wrong for us to pray for God to do what he's promised.

In fact, it's good for us to do it. It brings our hearts into alignment with his will when we pray that way. Rightly understood, God's sovereign promises do not lead us into passivity.

If your understanding of God's sovereign plan and is executing all things out after the counsel of his own will leaves you prayerless, you don't really understand sovereignty.

You're holding on to it the wrong way. You've got the camera faced in the wrong direction. Rightly understood, God's sovereign promises don't lead us to complacency.

[57:53] They make us put feet to our prayers and to engage with God who's promised to accomplish his will and to do his good purposes. And so as we worship that God would be magnified, we pray.

Now God is magnified, isn't he? He is glorious. My praying to him, my praising him doesn't make him more glorious. No, but he becomes larger in my eyes and so I pray that way.

God has promised that he's redeeming a people for his namesake and so we pray for people to be saved, people we love, people we know. We don't know God's will, we don't know who the elect are. It is none of your business.

Your business is to share the good news of Christ and to pray and earnestly seek God to move and to accomplish his good purposes. And as we engage this way, we'll find that our covenant keeping God honors those who honor him and he is worthy of our utmost labor and love.

Lord, we thank you for this passage. It is dense, full, it is different. There are concerns within it that in some ways seem foreign to us and yet there are enduring principles that we ought to live by.

[59:14] Lord, may we live to make much of you, to be engaged in your work, to be on the move with you and so bring glory to your name and good to us.

We ask it in the name of Christ. Amen. Amen.